

# Civic Education in Spain: A Critical Review of Policy

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## 1. Context

For some time Spain has been struggling to reform an outdated education system. As part of a new, dynamic Europe in the twenty-first century Spain is being called upon to renovate and revitalize its school curriculum ([Vázquez 2001](#)). More specifically, young Spanish citizens need to be more aware and active within their democracy and need to play an active role within the new Europe of the twenty-first century. In an increasingly globalized world the next generation of Spanish, European citizens will need to be more actively engaged in order to maintain a vital democracy. The tragic sinking of the Prestige off the northern Spanish coast in late 2002, and the consequential devastating oil spillage, provided an excellent opportunity for such participation. While many Spanish citizens participated in the arduous clean-up task, much could have been achieved by young citizens to democratically address significant issues of environmental pollution. That they did not reflect, in part, is a lack of civic engagement of young Spanish citizens which, in turn, reflects inadequate education for democratic citizenship in Spanish schools.

Yet over the past decade a new approach to education for democratic citizenship has appeared in parts of Europe. Using program reviews, research projects, policy initiatives and major curriculum resource projects it has been possible to identify the beginnings of a new, more engaging educational approach to democratic citizenship ([Council of Europe 1998](#); [Torney-Purta, Schwille, Amadeo 1999](#); [Naval, Print, Veldhuis 2002](#)). While equally an international phenomenon, this educational approach has been demonstrated in both the established democracies as well as the newer democracies of Europe. To a large degree these developments reflected changing political circumstances driven by the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR and are symbolized by the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall.

The outcome of these initiatives has been a conceptualizing, revitalizing or, in some instances, the creation of entirely new programs for democratic citizenship within school curricula. These programs have encouraged a new approach to civic education, based upon democratic citizenship, that has sought to focus the young on becoming knowledgeable, active citizens whose civic engagement and application of democratic values can sustain their democracy ([Audigier 1996](#); [European Commission 1998](#); [Hahn, 1998](#); [Council of Europe 1998](#); [Crick 1998](#); [Naval, Print, Veldhuis 2002](#)). Within Europe a widening consensus has appeared that the health and stability of democracies and the development of societies inspired by attention to human rights, do not only depend on the good governance of the state, but more importantly on the virtues of individual citizens ([European Commission 1998](#); [Council of Europe 1998](#); [Van Deth, et. al. 1999](#); [Kerr 1999](#); [Torney-Purta, et. al. 1999](#); [Naval 2000](#)). What is required is the attitude and capacity to engage in dialogue, respect, solidarity, tolerance and a sense of responsibility towards the common good of society and of humanity as a whole. In this way, citizenship is not only considered as a legal status but also as a competence, a lifestyle if you will, whose acquisition cannot be left to chance. In other words, it should be developed through education in schools as well as in other environments.

What has been driving this concern about the health and survival of established democracies? Extensive research over the past decade has identified what appears to be a fundamental and growing malaise - the decline in civic engagement of citizens within our democracies. Much has

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been made of this phenomenon and the related decline in social capital in the media and the literature, particularly in the United States with its consequential impact on the healthiness of the US democracy. The situation in Europe is far from impressive as the twenty-first century unfolds. The literature suggests that part of the answer to greater engagement in democracy by young people may be found in the forms of civic education provided through their schools (Audigier 1999; European Commission 1998; Council of Europe 1998; Naval, Print, Veldhuis 2002).

## 2. Civic education

Civic education is an essential dimension of the education imparted in schools by which young people become informed and active citizens within their society. In the context of schools, students acquire the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to become citizens (Hahn 1998; Patrick, Bahmueller 1999; Print 1999; Patrick 1999). Hopefully this means education for democratic citizenship, but not necessarily so.

There are many ways that civic education may be addressed within educational systems - formal curriculum, informal curriculum and the extra-curriculum. Through the formal curriculum (mostly school subjects) students can learn about systems and institutions of government, democratic processes, political heritage, rights and responsibilities of citizens, the judicial system and public administration. They also should acquire a set of skills relative to this knowledge such as active citizenship, inquiry, cooperation and critical reflection. Underpinning both knowledge and skills is a set of values which guide the other two components and unify them into a comprehensive whole. These values include a commitment to democratic processes, human rights, tolerance, social justice and the like (Hahn 1998; Torney-Purta, Schwille, Amadeo 1999; Patrick, Bahmueller 1999).

Through the informal curriculum students may learn more active, engaged lessons through such experiences as participating in a students council, school parliament, service/community learning and so forth. While part of the informal curriculum, these learning experiences may be quite explicit within schools, though are usually perceived as of less importance than formal curricular learning.

The hidden curriculum is mostly concerned with the values and attitudes students acquire from the interactions with their teachers and from the ethos and culture of the individual school. The values and attitudes acquired through the hidden curriculum can be extremely powerful and may be at odds with the learning stated in the formal curriculum.

For democracies to be effective and secure they require the active participation of their citizens. Citizens may acquire the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to be active citizens from many sources but it is well recognized that schooling should provide a major input in that process. Schools provide a commonly available opportunity for all future citizens to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions necessary to enable them to be effective citizens in their democracy (Bahmueller, Patrick 1999; Torney-Purta, Lehaman, Oswald, Schultz 2001). We know that Civic Education can help prepare more effective citizens (Nie, Junn, Stehlik-Barry 1996; Torney-Purta, et. al. 1999; John, Halpern, Morris 2001) and consequently should be an integral component of any school curriculum. Programs in civic education in schools can also contribute to enhancing social capital amongst young people becoming citizens (John, Halpern, Morris 2001; Print, Coleman 2003). But what of Civic Education in Spain and its attempt to be integrated within Spanish schools?

## 3. Civic education in Spain

Civic Education was part of the educational reform program contained in the General Law for the Regulation of the Spanish Educational System (LOGSE 1990). It was recognized and accepted, at least in theory, as belonging to the school curriculum and should therefore be part of every Spanish school. Despite this reason to be optimistic, however, up to now efforts to implement it have not been satisfactory.

To begin with there are several problematic issues (VVAA 2000). We should start by inquiring about the model of Civic Education in the LOGSE which is contradictory in nature. Although Spanish government policy has moved towards giving greater autonomy to regional authorities in educational matters, Spain is clearly identified with those countries with a national educational system. Nonetheless, when compared with other countries with centralized systems of education, Spain has a flexible system because it allows for a significant degree of regional autonomy.

More concretely, policies or laws in relation to Civic Education issued by the national government are usually expressed in broad terms which provide sufficient parameters to define the scope, sequence and the implementation of Civic Education. It is the responsibility of each 'autonomous' region (Comunidades Autonomas) to specify in greater detail the provisions of a national policy.

The analysis of the LOGSE documents reveals some characteristics of present-day Spanish society that have been taken into account in the desired configuration of Civic Education for schools. Today Spain is essentially a democratic, pluralistic, economically competitive, constantly changing European country, with open borders that result in a high mobility of people. Reflecting this context, the Spanish model of civic education lies at the maximalist end of a minimalist-maximalist continuum.

The LOGSE has responded to a widespread social demand by stipulating that the education in values be a guiding core principle of the educational system. The formal system of education is being constituted as a school for the formation in citizenship and for the acquisition of ethically desirable attitudes. Our society is asking the school not to limit itself to transmitting knowledge. Instead, it is being required to form persons who are capable of getting the best out of life and of living in harmony with others in society, persons who know what they value and who know how to conduct themselves (MEC 1994a).

In considering this position the problem may be raised - Is the Spanish model of Civic Education a model about, through or for citizenship? This is a fundamental question addressed, either directly or indirectly, by all education systems when they devise and implement civic education in their schools.

In education about citizenship, the approach is essentially didactic and cognitive whereby students are given knowledge and understanding of national history, of governmental structures and processes in political life. Education through citizenship, by contrast, implies an active learning process through participatory experiences in the school or in the local community and beyond. This learning process reinforces the cognitive component. And lastly, education for citizenship combines the elements of the two previous models and provides the students with an array of knowledge, abilities and aptitudes, values and attitudes that will enable them to actively and intelligently assume the roles and the responsibilities in their adult life as citizens. This model links Civic Education to the whole educational experience of the students. Which approach to civic education is advocated for Spanish students?

Confusingly, LOGSE reveals an absence of adequate definition for Civic Education, especially at the level of implementation in schools, that allows a clear answer to the question above. Given the cross-curricular character of the Spanish approach to civic education, it seems that the model of education for citizenship fits best. Since it is clear that civic education is broader than what can be written in a formal curriculum, it then involves an informal and hidden curriculum that extends to the entire school and to the extra-curricular activities, as well as the daily life experiences of the students. Nevertheless Civic Education has been incorporated, in part, within the Spanish school curriculum in three principal ways:

- 1) Civic education is explicitly included as cross-curricular theme and is presented under the title "Moral and Civic Education" at Pre-school Education (0 to 6 years old); Primary Education (6 to 12 years old); Secondary Compulsory Education (12 to 16 years old). At first glance, it seems to suffer from a lack of concretion in the curriculum and a lack of the indispensable institutional support.
- 2) In primary schools, Civic Education is related to the knowledge area of natural, social and cultural environment. Consequently, it would not be compulsory and would be integrated in the 170 hours/year dedicated to this area.

3) Similarly, in secondary schools, Civic Education is linked with History, Geography, and the Social Sciences, where it is considered separately but integrated and not compulsory.

"... the curricular approach adopted by the educational reform with respect to moral and civic education must be kept in mind: It has to pervade the entire curriculum and for this reason, it is not formulated as an area or a specific subject. Besides, it is not meant to be an alternative option for some students only, that is, for those who have decided not to take religion as a subject. However, it is only during the last year of compulsory education that themes requiring a formal reflection about moral matters are included in the area of Social Sciences, Geography and History" (MEC 1994a).

The problem for Spanish educators then is - how much can Civic Education be integrated within the curriculum? And how can Civic Education be integrated effectively? The Spanish education system has pinned its hopes on a cross-curricular approach to address these questions.

## 4. A Cross-curricular Approach

The General Law for the Regulation of the Educational System (LOGSE 1990) established a legal framework that governed the introduction of cross-curricular themes within Spanish schooling (MEC 1991a,b; 1994b; 1996). The term cross-curricular refers to "a set of educational content and guiding core ideas for educational activity that are not bound to any particular subject. It is common to all; hence, instead of creating new disciplines, it is considered more suitable that they are tackled cross-curricularly in the whole curriculum of the school" (Yus 1998). In Spain examples include Civic and Moral Education, Education for Peace, for Health, for the Equality of Opportunities Between Sexes, Environmental Education, Sex Education, Consumer Education and the Traffic Education (MEC 1992a).

The ministerial proposal on educational reform is the most commonly known, but there are other proposals that largely, but not always, coincide with that of the "Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia" (MEC). For example, the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) has proposed the following as cross-curricular topics: Audio-visual education, Pro-Europe Education, International Cooperation, Patrimony, Multicultural Education, Information Technology and Education for Living with Others (Bisquerra 1996).

Several features characterize a cross-curricular approach to education which endow it with a potentially powerful role to play in schools. Importantly, cross-curricular themes require a recognition that knowledge should not be locked into a particular area or domains, but is interrelated (Print 1993; Dolz, et. al. 1994). Within schooling, the cross-curriculum approach argues for the thematic elaboration of educational content (cross-curricular themes) over the traditional conception of knowledge as compartmentalized into disciplines or domains of knowledge that are not interrelated (Print 1993). Consequently, cross-curricular approach calls for a new understanding of the concept of the school curriculum because it 'restructures' knowledge in a fundamentally interconnected manner.

Second, cross-curricular themes try to respond to social demands or issues. They reflect the social and human problems found in the social context of the school, thereby reinforcing the socializing function of the school. Furthermore, as cross-curricular themes significantly relate to the daily concerns of citizens they inevitably contribute to the building of a society that is more free, peaceful and more respectful of persons, as well as, of the natural environment (MEC 1992a).

Third, cross-curricular themes demand an inquiry into the end purposes of education, namely the formation of persons. While information is important among the relevant cross-curricular themes, it comes with the development of attitudes and values; hence, ultimately they aim at promoting the integral formation of the students. Dolz, Uceda and Martin (1994) contend that cross-curricular themes are concerned with forming persons who are able to rationally and autonomously build their own system of values and, from these values, they are able to critically judge the reality around them and to contribute towards its transformation and improvement.

Finally, because these ideas need to pervade all educational activity, the whole educational

community, but especially teachers, are jointly responsible for its realization and they have to be incorporated in school education plans and in particular in the curricular plan and in the programs that teachers carry out in classrooms (MEC 1992a).

In summary, cross-curricular themes emanate from the vital experiences of society and students; try to respond to certain social demands related to the environment; foment critical reflection concerning the contradictions in present-day society; involve an explicit clarification of the hidden curriculum; contribute to the integral development of persons; and stimulate a cooperative and participatory methodology (Cremades, et.al. 1995).

## 5. Reconceptualizing the Curriculum

If the cross-curricular approach is to be taken seriously in Spain, it requires a profound review of the ends and methods of education in Spanish schools. Because it is perceived by many as opposed to some ingrained assumptions in the Spanish educational system, its implementation has been slow and for the same reason, it requires critical appraisal. Consequently, the introduction of cross-curricular themes prescribed by the 1990 Educational Reform has given rise to a debate in Spain which remains on-going. Nevertheless, it has been hailed as "one of the most innovative proposals and, at the same time, one of the most exciting challenges that needs to be confronted in our time" (Gonzales Lucini 1994).

The debate that began as a result of that proposal has raised questions about the dominant model of knowledge in education. The scientific-positivist paradigm that defends the exclusive objectivity of science and which promotes analytical thinking and a conception of knowledge that is fragmented into disciplines, is now challenged by a paradigm that features the complexity, interdependence and complementary nature of the disciplines. This approach promotes a new global vision or paradigm of knowledge characterized as systemic or holistic, and is concerned with ensuring students' understanding, rather than with the mere efficacy of results. With the active construction of knowledge as its goal, the cross-curricular approach demands that the selection of content revolve around problems that are relevant to man and society, beginning with the interests and concerns of students. Consequently, with this cross-curricular approach, the school assumes an emancipating role as an agent of social and cultural transformation through an integrative, comprehensive and holistic paradigm and opens itself to be a vehicle for change (Gimeno 1988; Torre 1993a, 1993b).

### 5.1. Reviewing the Curriculum

With the goal of ensuring the coherence and continuity of the developmental plan of education in Spain, the Ministry of Education implemented the so-called Basic Curriculum Design (DCB) that specifies -into extreme detail- a common curriculum framework for all levels of pre-school and compulsory education. The Curriculum Base Design consists of curriculum orientations which allow the adaptation and application of curricular proposals in each school thus, at least in theory, avoiding the uniformity of the curriculum throughout the whole country. The elements that comprise the DCB are:

- 1) Determination of general objectives for each level, expressed in terms of capacities that the students must acquire by the end of the level;
- 2) established areas in which the different fields of knowledge are organized;
- 3) determination of content - consisting of concepts, procedures, values and attitudes - that are appropriate for the development of the capacities specified in the objectives of each area;
- 4) description of the didactic orientations and suggestions on evaluation that include a series of principles for designing the teaching-learning activities and their evaluation (Marchesi, Martin 1989; MEC 1989a, 1993a).

At least in intentions, the education plan in each level of schooling, called the Curriculum Plan (PC), is formulated taking into account the DCB, as well as the norms established by the educational

administration of the Autonomous Community where the school is located. Each school would also influence the curriculum through local orientations such as the educational plan of the school or PEC (Proyecto Educativo de Centro).

These requirements oblige all schools in Spain to reflect, analyze, discuss and contrast their educational aims and purposes and should enable them to define more clearly the general objectives for each level of education. Likewise, they are encouraged to evaluate the materials and human resources that they would need to attain their proposed objectives. The evaluation of the educational infrastructure and needs implicitly requires schools to specify the principal characteristics of their students, their needs and intellectual potential, motivations, personal adjustment, interpersonal relations and social behavior. A comparison of these data with the content of the official curriculum allows schools to determine their Curriculum Plan and if opportune, to consider modifying the objectives in the level and in the area (Coll 1988, 1992; Puigdemílvoll 1993). In this way, too, the school could introduce more concrete details into the official curriculum and identify some objectives that directly reflect their particular problems and needs.

Cross-curricular themes are already incorporated in the official curriculum through prepared documents that explain each of the cross-curricular themes, highlighting the different elements in the curriculum of the different levels and areas where those themes are explicitly included (MEC 1992a, 1993b). However, this process only prescribes the basic elements that comprise each educational level. Teachers and schools have to reflect on the importance of these ideas, then develop and formalize them further to be incorporated in the Education Plan of the School (PEC), the Curriculum Plan (PC) of each level, the programs of each area and the daily implementation in the classroom. In this process teachers need to:

- Analyze the social context, needs and distinguishing features of students to determine the way cross-curricular themes could contribute towards formulating the educational aims of the school.
- Propose an organizational structure to facilitate the efficient and effective use of human resources, location, space and time, and the teaching materials for the development of cross-curricular themes. It would also affect the distribution of functions and responsibilities among the staff, with the end of facilitating a coherent, participatory and integrated education within the school.
- Focus on the development of capacities that are most related with the cross-curricular themes during the process of formulating the general objectives for each of the levels, and for each area.
- Organize and sequence content in accord with their global character. This requires having recourse to the different fields of knowledge and using the cross-curricular themes as the hinges around which knowledge is to be organized.
- Formulate methodological criteria, space, time, grouping or selection of didactic materials
- And devise means for evaluation of learning achieved with respect to those themes and of the teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

## 6. Moral and Civic Education in the Spanish Ministry's Proposal

The Ministry's proposal stressed the need for the public sector to assume responsibility for the formation of moral and civic values (MEC 1992b). Moral education was to engage students in individual and collective reflection resulting in a critical analysis of the prevailing social and moral norms in such a way that would help generate ideas leading to a more just and peaceful co-existence among persons. Moral education should encourage behavior and social habits that reinforce values such as social justice, solidarity, cooperation and respect for nature. In summary, the following are the goals of moral and civic education within the framework of the LOGSE:

- 1) to develop the ability to critically analyze the prevailing injustices and social norms;
- 2) to develop the ability to construct general principles that concern values, in a way that is autonomous, rational and open to dialogue;
- 3) to foment the behavior according to the principles and norms that the individual has personally

determined;

4) to succeed in passing on the norms that are democratically agreed upon in society in the pursuit of justice and the welfare of all (MEC 1992b, 14).

These goals were a foundation for a moral and civic education model which fostered a rational and autonomous construction of principles, values and norms. The model rejects others that promote absolute values transmitted unilaterally, yet also deems unacceptable those models characterized by relativism, where values are based totally on subjective criteria and, consequently, do not admit the possibility of education.

Thus, the Spanish model foment and respects the moral autonomy of each person, while encouraging the overcoming of individualistic tendencies, encourages solutions based on reason and consensus obtained through dialogue. The intention is to construct forms of personal and collective ways of living that are more just. In short, the model proposed in the educational reform begins with principles of autonomy and of dialogic reason and uses these as the means to acquire values such as critical thinking, openness to others and the respect for human rights (MEC 1992b). The moral profile reflected in the Ministry's proposal is defined by the following features:

- 1) Development of universal structures of moral judgment that allow the acceptance of general principles of values such as justice and solidarity.
- 2) Acquisition of capacities for dialogue that incline persons towards just mutual agreements and democratic participation.
- 3) Development of a self-image and lifestyle that are in accord with personally desired values.
- 4) Acquisition of knowledge that allows critical and creative dialogue with reality, and at the same time permits the elaboration of contextual and just norms and projects.
- 5) Development of capacities that favor the coherence between judgment and moral action.
- 6) Recognition and assimilation of universally desired values that are contained in the Declaration on Human Rights, and the Spanish Constitution.
- 7) Understanding, respecting and establishing norms that promote a just co-existence in community life (MEC 1992b, 15-16).

## 6.1. Reviewing the Proposal

The Ministry analyzed the curricula of schools to highlight relevant elements that refer directly or could be easily referred to the objectives, content and evaluation criteria of Moral and Civic Education. This is a difficult process given the broad vision of Moral and Civic Education and the dependency on attitudes and preferences of teachers.

Nevertheless, at the level of Pre-school Education the objectives refer to the students' acquisition of trusting and autonomous binding relationships with their equals and with adults through harmonizing personal interests with that of others. Similarly, it refers to the development of habits and attitudes that incline the person to help and collaborate with others. The curriculum areas emphasized include: Personal Identity and Autonomy; Physical and Social Environment; and Communication and Representation. With regard to the conceptual, procedural and attitudinal elements the following are emphasized: the body and self-image; play and movements; activity and ordinary life; the care for oneself; the first social groups; life in society; objects, animals and plants; oral and written language; and creative expression. (MEC 1992b, 19-25),

At the level of Primary Education the objectives refer to autonomous conduct as an individual and in groups, developing capacities for harmonious and constructive relationships, appreciation of basic values that govern life and social co-existence, knowledge and respect for the natural and social environment and for the cultural and linguistic patrimony; as well as habits that promote health and well-being. (MEC 1992b, 27-39),

The curriculum areas which address these objectives include the Environment; Artistic Education; Physical Education; Literature and Spanish Language; Foreign Language; and Mathematics. This

subject matter is supported by conceptual, procedural and attitudinal content including health and the human being, landscapes, physical environment, the living beings, matter and its properties, population and human activity, social organization, means of communication and transportation, change and historical places, songs, vocal and instrumental expression, dramatic play, arts and culture, the body, bodily health, games, forms of oral and written communication, analysis and reflection on one's own language.

At primary school level evaluative criteria emphasize respect for the norms that govern teamwork, responsible fulfillment of assigned tasks, assumption of duties and responsibilities as a member of a group, use of dialogue to resolve conflicts, to demonstrate in one's conduct and one's words the respect towards others; to give more importance to personal effort and harmony, rather than on competition, during games, to know how to identify in oral and written texts points of view and use of language that reflect social, racial, sexual or other types of discrimination.

In compulsory secondary education Civic and Moral Education aim at achieving intellectual, social and moral autonomy among students. Such autonomy should culminate in the construction of one's personal identity, in the acceptance of a positive self-concept. It encourages the student to take a stance on issues and to choose to respect the beliefs, attitudes and basic values of tradition and cultural patrimony, as well as the rights and duties of citizens (MEC 1992b, 41-57).

The curriculum areas which these objectives include Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Geography and History, Physical Education, Visual and Creative Education, Literature and the Spanish Language, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Music and Technology. To these may be added relevant conceptual, procedural and attitudinal content such as human beings as agents of change, the environment and geography, population and urbanization, human activity and geographical location, historical societies, society and historical change, cultural diversity, economy, work, participation, conflict, art and contemporary culture, moral life and ethical reflection, mobile properties, games and sports, visual language, literature, uses and forms of oral and written communication, systems of verbal and non-verbal communication, processes and technical resolution of problems, scientific and technical resources, technology and society.

And finally the evaluation criteria emphasize knowing how to analyze and to evaluate current socio-economic issues and conflicts, to examine and to explain facts or proceedings in public life and attitudes and daily behavior in the light of the Spanish Constitution, to prepare reports and to participate in debates about controversial issues in ordinary contemporary life, to identify the elements of an ethical model of life and of human conduct by taking a stand with regard to moral dilemmas that arise in the present-day world.

## 7. Teaching Moral and Civic Education (MCE)

The MEC (1992b) also suggested general orientations on teaching that would facilitate incorporation of MCE in the school's education plan of the school, in the curriculum plan of the level, and classroom programs. Learning-teaching experiences that form part of the design of the school's plan would include:

- 1) the organization of school and class groupings to facilitate democratic participation of students and teachers, and sustain a forum for dialogue to resolve issues related to living together in the context of school life. In short, a democratic school climate should be fostered.
- 2) the need to commit to and participate in civic activities that are not necessarily school-based but for which the school must prepare the students and whose realization the school could facilitate.
- 3) Ways to achieve the objectives of Moral Education, including specific methods such as the discussion of moral dilemmas, values clarification, role-playing, critical understanding, self-regulation and awareness. Sufficient time within each area must be guaranteed to avoid Moral Education becoming sporadic and disorganized teaching.

To achieve these experiences teachers were advised by the Ministry to:



- tackle issues affecting their students even though, personally, they feel incapable of resolving them;
- not to make their opinions explicit unless the students require it and only after having an exchange of opinions among the students;
- not to establish values, norms or judgments following the conventional teaching methods but rather, to foster the discovery of these values by means of analysis, reflection and dialogue;
- to defend differences in opinions;
- to create a climate that is warm and tolerant and that facilitates an engaging and creative communication.

Finally, the Ministry's proposal recommended a process of evaluation of Moral and Civic Education whereby:

- 1) an evaluative judgment should never be a judgment about the morality of the person being evaluated;
- 2) evaluation includes the capacity for cooperation, for dialogue, for empathy or social behavior that facilitates living with others;
- 3) the content of student opinions and judgments about controversial issues should not be evaluated.
- 4) the school climate would be evaluated so that teachers, by means of reflective discussion, also pay attention to the democratic and participatory climate.
- 5) teachers as a group would review their teaching practices by means of reports and of comparisons with the others, and identify areas for improvement (MEC 1992b, 78-83).

## 8. Critical Appraisal

For some years educational response to the LOGSE and MEC recommendations (1992b) were characterized by a lack of support and implementation. In more recent years, however, Spanish society has seen the need for a program on moral and civic education. Some suggest that MCE is an important cross-curricular element that could unify and span the whole curriculum (Rodríguez Rojo 1996; Naval 1998). This turnaround is reflected in the evolution of the LOGSE. In 1989 Moral and Civic Education does not appear as a cross-curriculum element, but three years later it appears as a core element (MEC 1992b). And by 1994 there is increasing interest and commitment with respect to civic formation by inclusion as a basic goal in education, (MEC 1994a).

Nevertheless there is disagreement as to the role of formal education as the primary context for society to form community spirit. Although this is true to some extent, it remains to be a narrow vision because it ignores the educational potential of other agents such as the family, the means of communication, the non-government organizations, the administrative institutions and local bodies or of society in general.

This potentially creates an imbalance between the civic values and behaviors that are being introduced in the curriculum, on the one hand, and the prevailing values and the dominant social model, on the other hand. It is, therefore, not surprising that the school is posing questions concerning its ability to educate for life and concerning its real efficacy to do so because the citizen is not well-trained to thrive in the society of which he is a part (Yus 1994). In the same way, these imbalances leave the student to resolve on their own the conflicting values transmitted by the formal and non-formal agents of education (Bolívar 1998), not only by filtering what is transmitted in the academic sphere but also by choosing only those values that are less demanding or are more widely accepted.

It is not ideal to leave the responsibility for moral and civic education to the schools, but rather to seek collaboration with different agents of education. It would be a utopia and illusory for the educational system to aim at changing the world, by preparing the students for democratic participation and cooperation, for example, while socio-political structures remain unchanged. On

the other hand, the lack of unity and commitment among the different agents of education can relegate moral and civic education to a superficial project, incapable of implicating the complete personal and social reality in all its dimensions.

The image of impregnation or infusion that is implied in the LOGSE proposal and that demands the programming of the process of teaching and learning, is not a generalized and actual achievement in Spain. Perhaps the problem persists because the burden of forging the agreement in the basic principles demanded by an integral education and the drawing out of moral and civic content in the different areas are left once again in the hands of teachers. It is the teaching staff by themselves, through their plans or in the course of their activities, who will have to resolve the problems that the experts have not known how to resolve.

This is not the only difficulty inherent in the implementation of the cross-curriculum ideas. Cross-curriculum themes are invariably weakened by a lack of institutional support. It is true that by their very nature, they possess a peculiar place in the curriculum. But the objectives and content are not legislated nor is their teaching regulated by a higher legal authority. This condition makes them interesting but problematic and at present they are considered secondary to the content of the academic disciplines (Bolívar 1996). In many cases, the innovative potential of teaching MCE has been reduced to depending on a type of activity or celebration (such as Day of the Tree, Day of Peace or of the Constitution), to the creation of its own space in the curriculum (optional) or these topics are dealt with in the tutorial sessions (Celorio 1996).

In an educational culture accustomed to a tradition based on academic disciplines, the cross-curriculum vision introduces a certain complexity and danger that these themes would be left without any definite development. For example the MEC (1994a) points out that this type of education "constitutes the central point of reference around which all the other cross-curricular themes should revolve"; that is to say, since all the cross-curricular themes touch on and are related to a personal and social ethical foundation, then, they all enter in the field of Moral and Civic education (González Lucini 1993). One could, therefore, ask if this has its own independent reality or, on the contrary, it can be reduced to a "sewing box" where any content is valid. Is Moral and Civic Education different from education for life in society and for living with others?

From the very start of the educational reform, it has been insisted upon that what constitutes moral and civic education has to be transmitted in real contexts, to educate in practice through example and to translate into concrete attitudes and behaviors (González Lucini 1994).

Nevertheless, in spite of the nobility of this proposal, the passage of time is a witness to the difficulty of putting this into practice. Among those who have thoroughly studied this issue, there are those who point out (Bolívar 1998) the danger of considering Moral and Civic Education as a matter that is eminently a question of attitudes. In fact, the promotion of students through the different levels in schools depends more or less on their achievements in specific traditional disciplines, not on the type of civic or moral behavior that they manifest. Hence, if there is an absence of an adequate design for the evaluation of those contents, as is the case in Spain, moral and civic education will remain in a secondary place.

We understand the reservations in tackling moral and civic matters by means of concrete conceptual content (moral dilemmas, values clarification, moral judgments or reasoning or dialogue) because it wants to avoid any trace of indoctrination. In this situation, the attainment of the desired integral education continues to be problematic in Spanish educational reform. Moral and Civic Education is nourished by values that are agreed upon by means of a dialogue, derived from a discursive ethics and consisting of a minimum set of values. Carpintero (1991) in referring to current studies on the psychology of moral development argues "the cognitive processes - reasoning and judgment - are given vital importance in the surveyed literature, while the absence of the motivational and affective dimensions is surprising - at least to me - and this is not to include the absence of classic themes on the good life, the happy life that was from the beginning the center of Greek reflection on moral conduct". It is evident that virtues and habits are missed.

Given the weakness of the way the content of attitudes is presented in the curriculum, it is necessary to complete the educational activity with cross-curriculum contents, especially with Moral and Civic Education. Apart from including the component on attitudes, it also incorporates the teaching of concepts and procedures. An education for citizenship requires the acquisition of some

knowledge, the adhesion to some values, that imply certain attitudes, habits, some specific conceptions or ways of seeing and perceiving the world, the reality around us and the formation of instrumental competencies and operative abilities, especially those that promote participation (Naval 1998; Naval, Print, Veldhuis 2002).

It is important that this educational challenge should not be allowed to get lost, in spite of the lack of agreement in approach or of the inherent difficulty in making it acquire a definite form in the Spanish curriculum. It is necessary to continue with the research started, to foster discussion groups to come up with new proposals and where appropriate, with proposals for change. It is important to continue thinking and forging what ought to be the education of the future citizens. The implementation of the Spanish Educational Law on the Quality of Education (2002) will be a new step on this way.

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KeyWords: Civic Education, Spain, Cross-curricular approach, curriculum, Moral and Civic Education, formal curriculum, informal curriculum, extra curriculum, MEC, LOGSE, democratic citizenship, educational system, regional autonomy, education for citizenship, educational reform, Basic Curriculum Design, Education Plan of the School (PEC), Curriculum Plan (PC)



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